



THE PRINCE AND THE DRUMMER

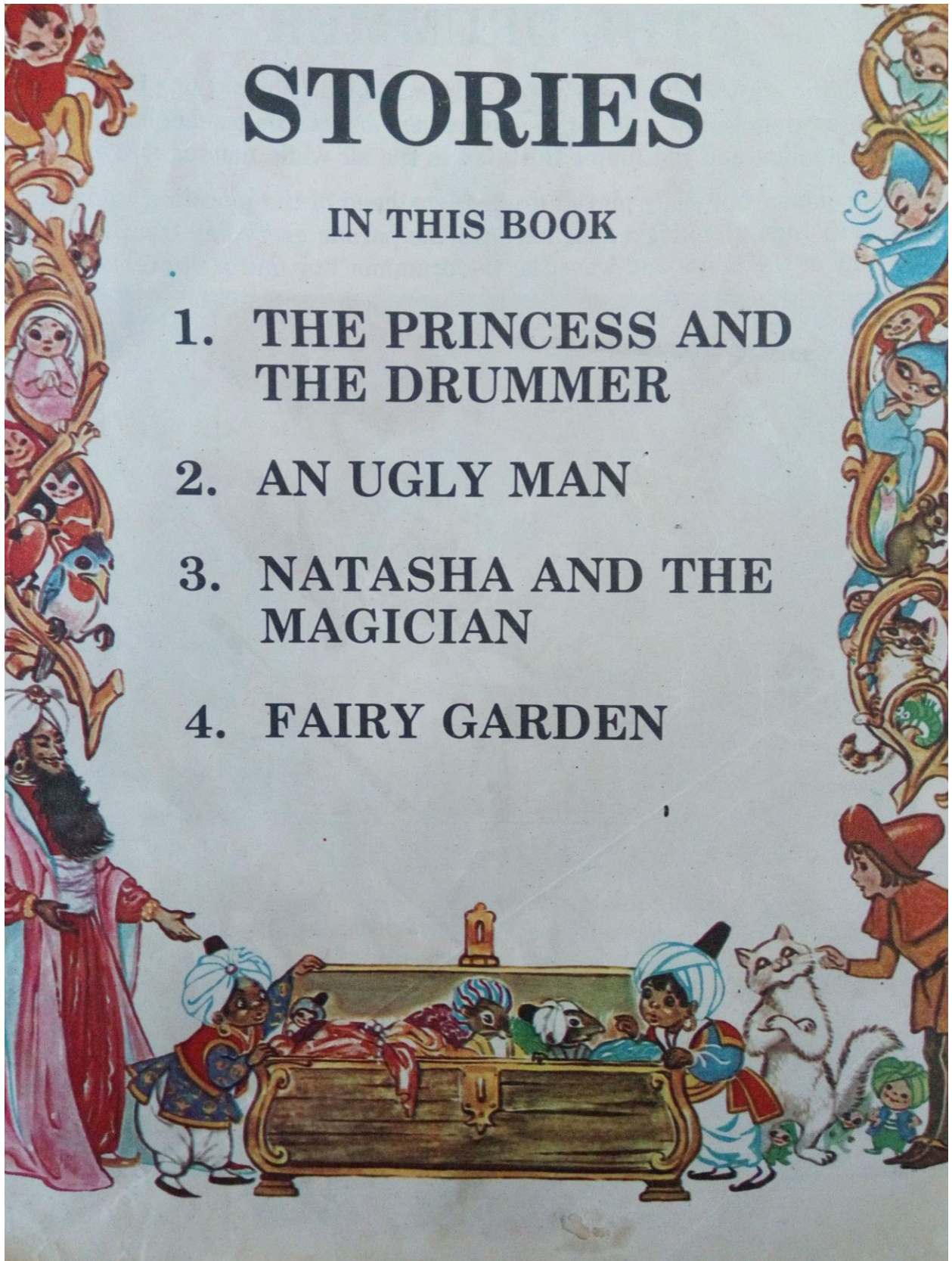
TITLE No. 32



STORIES

IN THIS BOOK

1. THE PRINCESS AND THE DRUMMER
2. AN UGLY MAN
3. NATASHA AND THE MAGICIAN
4. FAIRY GARDEN



THE PRINCESS AND THE DRUMMER

Once in the army of a king, there was a drummer who was a young boy. In his blue and bright yellow uniform, he looked very smart. His steel helmet shone in the sunlight and red plume fluttered in the air while playing the drum.

The drummer boy daily played drum at the head of the parading soldiers. Princess Judy, the king's daughter, saw the parade every day from the balcony of the castle and waved at the drummer boy out of appreciation.





The soldiers' parade was held daily. The princess Judy also watched the parade daily and waved at the drummer boy. She even clapped and smiled at him. At the applause from the princess, the drummer boy felt very proud.

One evening the drummer was feeling very happy because he had played the drum that morning very magnificently. When eating supper in the army mess, he said to the soldiers sitting near him, "How wonderful I feel when I see the princess admiring my drum-playing and waving at me. Have you ever seen her in the balcony of castle smiling and waving at me. She watches the parade daily." The soldiers were surprised by what the drummer boy was saying. Then they laughed at him.

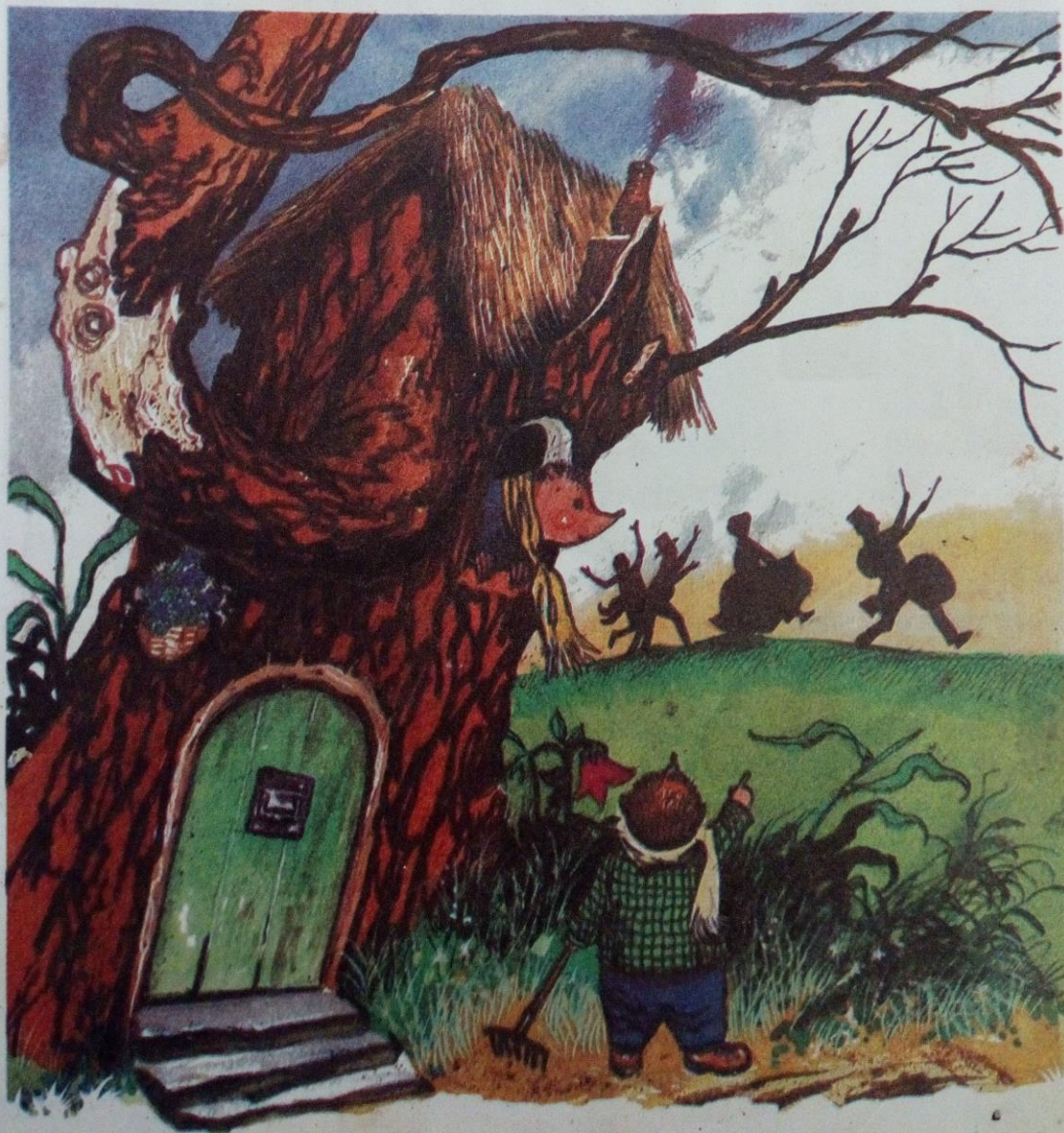
The soldiers said to the drummer boy, "How dare you think that the princess comes to the balcony to wave at you or to admire your drumming? Don't think you are so important or handsome. In fact, she comes to see us parading in the courtyard. She stands there to watch our smart marching in bright uniforms. How funny to say that a princess would applaud a drummer boy!"

The drummer boy was very young. He thought the soldiers were right, because they were much older and wiser. He felt very foolish as he had been thinking that the princess was applauding his drum-playing while she used to admire the marching soldiers. He thought he should give up the job and go somewhere else to try his luck. So, he resigned as drummer boy and left the castle.



The drummer boy said to himself, "I know no job other than drum-playing. And, I play drum very well. I should start playing drum in the villages. The village folk may like it and I may earn quite a lot. One day I may become so rich as to ask the princess to marry me." He was very hopeful of succeeding as a country drum-player.

People, in the country-side, though liked the drummer boy's skill and enjoyed his drum-playing, yet they did not give him much money. They would offer him sometimes supper or shelter to sleep during the night. The drummer boy was disappointed. He also found that in the absence of the clinking of swords and marching feet behind him, it was not possible for him to play the drum as magnificently as at the head of the soldiers.



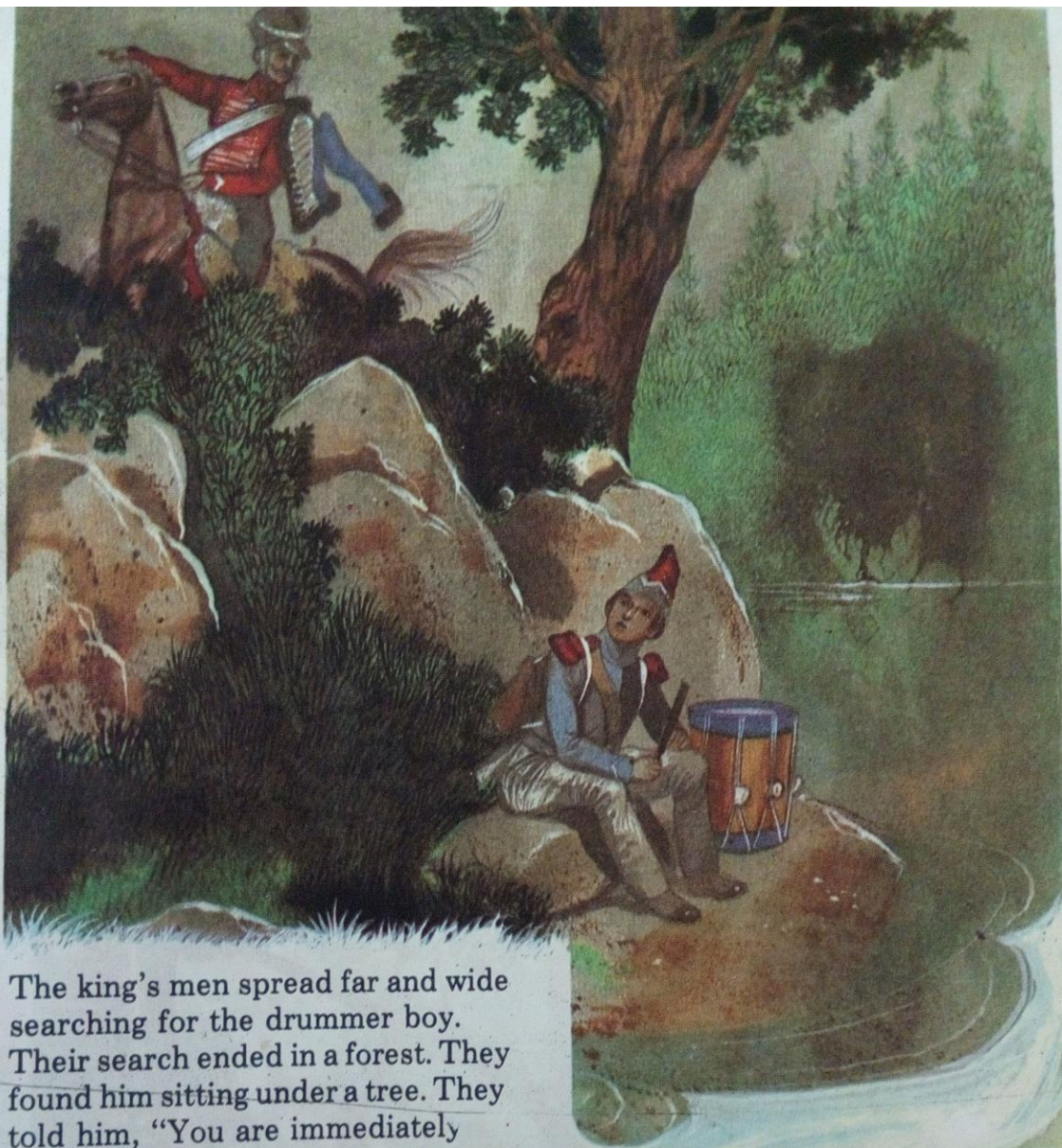


Finding that neither the villagers were generous enough to give him money nor his drum-playing there was as good as he had thought, the drummer boy felt very unhappy. He missed the soldiers whose smart marching used to make him play the drum. He also missed princess Judy whom he daily saw in the balcony of the castle.

On the other hand, princess Judy was lying sick in her bed. She was very sad. She always asked where
6 the drummer boy had gone and why

he did not play the drum at the head of the marching soldiers any more.

The king asked the commander of the soldiers about the drummer boy. He wanted to know the reason for his not playing the drum. The commander told him that the drummer boy had left the job and gone somewhere else. The king ordered to find the drummer boy.



The king's men spread far and wide searching for the drummer boy. Their search ended in a forest. They found him sitting under a tree. They told him, "You are immediately wanted by the king. Princess Judy is sick and asking for you. We think you were right. The princess did wave at you and admired your drum playing and not our marches."

The drummer boy was very pleased to hear that. He said, "I shall at once go with you. I myself have been missing you soldiers and the princess. I could not play my drum without

the clinking of your swords and marching feet."

One of the soldiers asked him not to waste time and sit behind him on the horse's back. When the drummer boy was presented before the king, he said, "Why did you go away? Why don't you see that you are not only a drummer boy, but also a soldier?"

The drummer boy was delighted. He began to play drum again at the head of the army. The princess was happy that her favourite drummer-boy was playing drum again. She recovered from her illness. Again she started standing in the balcony to wave at the drummer boy.

When the drummer boy grew up, within a few years, he became a general. The king himself gave the princess' hand to him in marriage.





AN UGLY MAN

Long long ago there was a princess whose name was Helen. Unfortunately she was once kidnapped by an ugly small man. He kept her inside an old tower on the top of a hill. Her room was always locked. She was provided with good food and fine clothes.

Except that the princess was all alone there and could not come out, she was quite comfortable. She, of course, did not like living in captivity. She wished to be with her family and friends. But there was no way to get out

The princess was sad not only because of her being kept in the tower, but also that prince Nelson of a neighbouring country was visiting the palace and a meeting had been, in advance, arranged between her and the prince.

One day, when the ugly small man came to her room, she said to him, "You are a good man. Please let me go. My parents must be worried and searching for me. Before they find me here and you are caught, set me free and I promise that you will be pardoned."

The ugly small man said, "I shall let you go if you call me handsome."

"How can it be ? You are ugly," exclaimed Helen.

The ugly man took her out into the gardens, around the tower, which were very beautiful.



"I hope you find these gardens beautiful. I maintain them with great care and labour. The fruits grown here are the best in this part of the country. How tasty are the vegetables, grown here, is known to you. Don't you think all this makes me handsome?" said the ugly small man.

The princess stood listening to the ugly man. Though she was not happy at all at having been kidnapped by the ugly man, yet she felt sympathy for him. She said, "No doubt your garden is very beautiful. I admit also that the fruits and the vegetables grown here are the best and the credit for that goes to you. But how can I call you handsome? You must admit that you are ugly and small."

When the princess found that she would never be able to get out of the tower, she thought, "If he keeps his promise to release me, what is wrong in calling him handsome and get free?" The princess made up her mind to do so.





As usual the ugly small man brought food for the princess next day. After eating it, Princess Helen asked him if she could go up to the roof of the tower. He agreed but with the condition that he would accompany her there. After climbing a number of steps, they reached the roof.

In the warm sunshine, Princess Helen said, "I am inhaling fresh air after a long time. How fine and lovely it is ! How beautiful the fields look from here ! I wish I don't have to go back to that room."

The ugly small man said, "Do you know these fields, which look so beautiful, are mine. I am very rich and I am a great soldier too." The princess said, "It is really very fine."



The ugly small man said, "You must admit that all these things make me handsome. Why can't you call me handsome?"

The princess looked at the ugly small man and saw he was miserable. She wanted to call him handsome. She knew that he was always well dressed and behaved like a gentleman. He was very polite and never gave her any cause to complain. Except his height and his face, his personality was not bad. She tried to figure him in her imagination as best as she could. Then she said, "Certainly you are handsome in your own way."

The ugly man looked towards the princess with his eyes full of pain and said, "You think I am handsome, put in my own way. So, you don't think I am handsome. I will beg you to call me just handsome."

The princess was moved. She took pity on him and, with great effort, said, "You are handsome." The ugly man's eyes shone bright. He looked very pleased. He said with joy, "Thank you, princess! You have made me so happy with these three words that I cannot express my delight. You don't know what good turn you have done to me."

The princess felt relieved. She hoped the ugly small man would keep his promise. Trying to avail of the opportunity, she said to him, "So, you are pleased with me. Now, will you set me free so that I go back to my family?"

"Why not? You are free now," the ugly small man replied. The princess did not hear what he had said. She was astonished to see the ugly small man growing taller and less ugly. She thought she must be sick or day-dreaming. The prince continued, "You will not go alone. I shall take you to your palace myself."





"No, there is no need for you to take so much trouble. Moreover, due to the visit of prince Nelson, there may be no room to accommodate you in the palace. You may come after some time," said princess Helen.

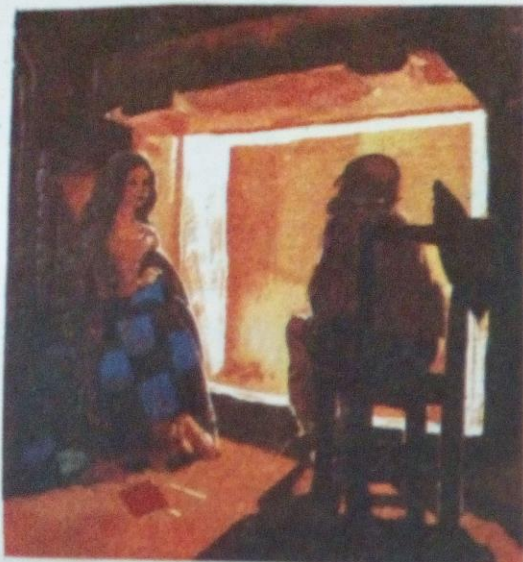
The ugly small man had been turned into a very handsome young man. He said, "You need not worry about accommodation for me in your palace. I know there will be some for me. I am prince Nelson who is expected at your palace. In fact, I was put under spell by a wicked witch and made ugly and small. The spell could only be broken by a girl calling me handsome and who would like to marry me."

Princess Helen was happy to know that prince Nelson also wanted to marry her. They returned to the palace of Helen and got married.



NATASHA AND THE MAGICIAN

Once upon a time a girl, named Natasha, lived alone. She was very kind and good to every body. One night she heard a knock at her door. When she opened it, she found an old man standing there. The old man asked her if he could stay for the night in her house and she would mend her ¹⁵robe which had patches on it. Natasha took pity on him and gave him shelter.



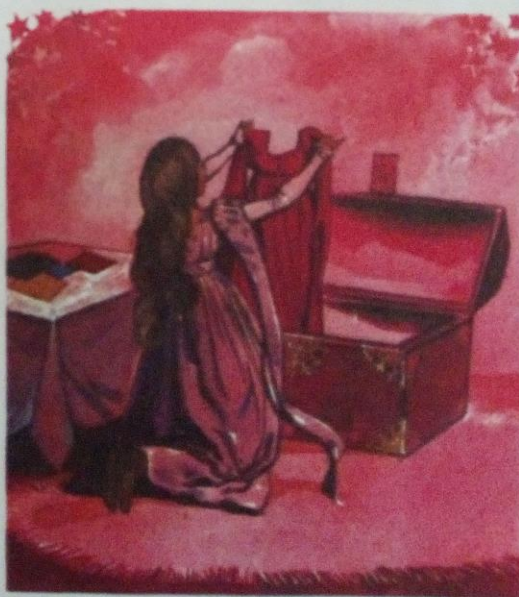
Natasha was not a rich girl, but she was very humane. She asked the old man if he would like to have dinner. He agreed if it was not inconvenient for her to arrange. Natasha gave him bread and cheese to eat. The old man was very happy and thanked her.

The old man asked her to let him sleep in the cowshed. He did not want to disturb her sleep with his snoring during the night and he was used to sleep anywhere, however uncomfortable. Before going to sleep, Natasha removed old patches of rags from the old man's robe and replaced them with new ones of the original colour of his robe. The old man was moved by her goodness.

The old man slept in the cowshed. When in the morning, Natasha got up and went to the cowshed to ask the old man to take breakfast, she

found that the old man had gone. He had left the old patches in the cowshed. Natasha licked one of them and wished she had elegant and costly clothes which the rich people wore. At once a box full of elegant new dresses appeared before her.

Natasha noticed that the patch, she had picked, had vanished with the appearance of the box. She immediately knew that the patches were not ordinary ones. They were magic patches and each of them would grant her a wish like the first one. Though she had heard of wizards and witches and magicians from many people, yet she had never believed them as none of them had ever met one. But now there was no doubt in her mind that the old man was a magician. She picked the second patch in her hand and thought for some time as to what she should wish.



Natasha wished the old man back in her home. The patch disappeared from Natasha's hand and the old man appeared before her. Now, he was not wearing a robe with patches but was dressed in fine clothes. He asked Natasha, "Why did you call me?"

Natasha said, "You forgot your patches here. These are magic ones and grant wishes. I thought I should return them as they belong to you."

"You are an honest girl. You are also very kind and large hearted. I had left them here knowingly. They are yours," said the magician.

Natasha picked up another patch and wished her house to be turned into a palace. Within no time a palace stood where her house had been.





The magician was very pleased with Natasha as she had been very wise in choosing a good place to live in. She picked up the fourth patch and wished servants to serve her with their wages paid to them for ever in advance. The magician was surprised at her wisdom. The magician said, "I think you should be asking now for a suitable husband. I suggest you to marry my son. He is not a magician. He is very handsome and intelligent. He will prove a good husband." Natasha blushed and gave her consent.

THE FAIRY GARDEN

Not very long ago, in a town lived two neighbours who were very fond of gardening. Name of one of the two was Rosefellow while the other was called by the name of Green Hood. They were also very good friends. They often used to discuss gardening as it was their only and common passion. They kept their gardens very clean. They never allowed any weed to grow. They were always in search of the best seeds and manure. They took every care to protect them from little animals of the forest and rodents.





Rosefellow and Green Hood were ever so absorbed in their gardening that they talked about nothing else. They were never tired of discussing how the wind was blowing or how the flowers were swinging. Nothing was important to them except their gardens.

One day a king's man came there and announced, "The king will employ that man as his royal gardener whose garden is found to be the best in his kingdom. His Majesty will send his inspectors to examine every garden after three months."

The royal announcer further said, "There will be a team of fifty gardeners who will work under the royal gardener. As wages, he will be paid a bag full of gold coins at the end of every year in addition to free food and clothing."

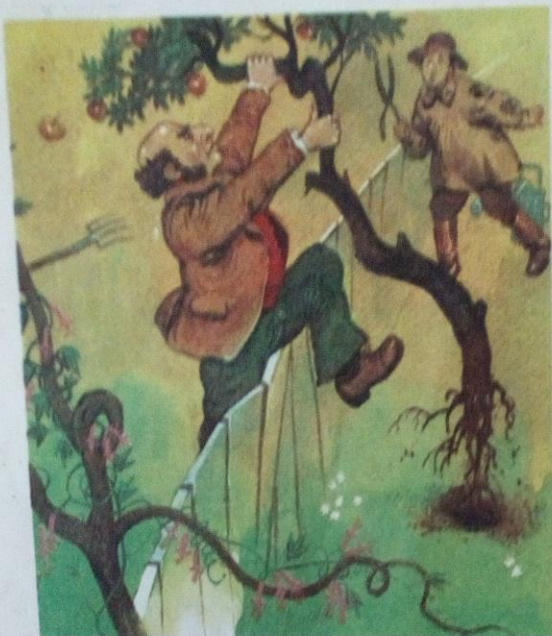
Rosefellow and Green Hood both heard the royal announcement. Rosefellow thought, "How fine it would be if I am appointed the royal

gardener. There I shall have all the land and all the opportunities to show my capabilities as a gardener. All the people of the land will have a chance to know what really flowers are. I know I can grow such varieties which none has heard of. And, then there will be a bag full of gold coins every year."

While Rosefellow was busy with his own schemes, Green Hood was also thinking on the same lines. He thought there was none else who could maintain and develop a garden better than he could, not even his neighbour Rosefellow.

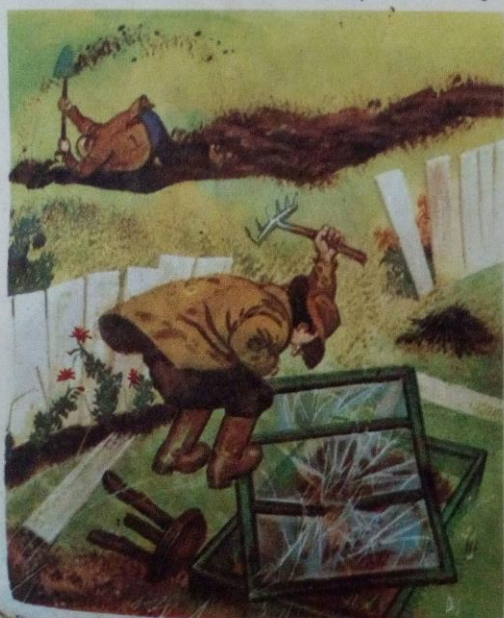
Both Rosefellow and Green Hood began to work with greater energy and for more hours daily. Now, they had no time to discuss about the weather or the seeds. Whenever Rosefellow looked at his neighbour's garden, he found that better than his.





He snipped off Green Hood's one of the flowers which happened to hang over the boundary wall. Green Hood felt hurt and was furious.

Rosefellow could also not be left behind. He said, "Why do you encroach upon other's land? You can't grow flowers on the boundary



wall and let them hang over my plants. You can't make your garden look the best at the cost of my garden."

Green Hood was so furious that he jumped over the boundary wall and shook one of Rosefellow's apple trees so badly that it was uprooted.

This enraged Rosefellow. He, in turn, broke frames, made of glass,



into pieces. Green Hood started digging out plants and bushes in Rosefellow's garden. When both of them were busy with ruining each other's garden, the king passed by.

Both Rosefellow and Green Hood continued fighting. They were not even aware of the king's presence there. Anger and jealousy had made them blind.



The king saw Rosefellow and Green Hood fighting with each other. He shouted at them, "How shameful ! You both are wasting time in quarrelling with each other while your gardens are in a mess. I cannot tolerate such nonsense." Both Rosefellow and Green Hood now knew that they had lost the chance of becoming the royal gardener.

Having learnt a bitter lesson, they apologized to each other and were once again good friends. The garden fairies were very sad to see what had happened to the gardens. They helped them by turning their messy and wrecked gardens into beautiful ones overnight.

Next day, when Rosefellow's and Green Hood's gardens were inspected they were declared the best. Both of them were appointed royal gardeners.